

CHAPTER SEVEN

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL: *Continue to provide and enhance the City's community facilities.*

INTRODUCTION

Community facilities include the infrastructure and other systems that provide various services to the City. These include the services associated with the community's safety (police and fire protection), health (water and sewer), or general well being (schools, libraries, care facilities). Some of these services are provided by the City while others are provided by the County, State, or Federal government. In some cases, the private sector has traditionally provided a needed service such as child care and medical facilities.

In 2000, the Planning Act was amended to add another vision that each community's master plan must implement. This requires that "Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur." Consequently, it is very important that the City be able to provide adequate services as its population grows. This chapter covers the following services within the City: the drinking water supply, the sanitary sewer disposal system, telecommunications, public safety, fire and rescue services, government mail delivery, the library system, educational facilities, and care facilities. The stormwater system is included in the Environment/Sensitive Areas Chapter. There will be separate chapters on Transportation issues as well as Recreation, Parks and Open Space.

Drinking Water and Sanitary Sewer System

Land use and utility system capacities are closely related. Adequate water supply and sewage disposal are essential to the maintenance of public health and safety and for continued growth of the City. These services can represent a large portion of the public capital investment. The amount of water consumption and sewage discharge is determined by the layout and mix of residential, commercial, and industrial property within the city.

The majority of the water and sanitary sewer systems within Rockville's boundaries are maintained by the City. Areas not serviced by the City are generally located close to the City's boundaries. Outside of the City's service area, water and sanitary sewer service is provided by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). The City's sanitary sewer system is linked to the WSSC's pipe system which in turn flows through the District of Columbia to the Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant. The plant is located on the Potomac River south of Washington, D.C.

The City of Rockville's portion of the total allocated treatment capacity is 9.4 million gallons per day. As of 1999, Rockville was producing 5.6 million gallons of wastewater per day (mgd). The piping system is divided according to the three overland drainage systems/watersheds within the City. The sewer capacity for each watershed varies. Watts

Branch has an allocated capacity of 2.8 mgd, Cabin John has 3.98 mgd, and Rock Creek has 2.58 mgd.

All proposed developments within the watersheds are evaluated to ensure that they will not tax either the sewer treatment system or the drinking water supply. Developers are required to pay for the initial infrastructure costs associated with a project. However, maintenance of the system within a public right-of-way is the City's responsibility. Currently, the Cabin John sewer system is undergoing a study to determine how best to upgrade its aging and undersized piping.

The City's drinking water supply system includes an intake pump on the Potomac River, a water treatment plant near the river, 5.7 miles of transmission lines, three storage tanks, and approximately 144 miles of local water lines to serve individual homes, business, and industries located in Rockville. The original water treatment plant was built in 1958.

Recently, the City made extensive upgrades to the treatment plant to modernize the facility, to expand its capacity to 14 millions gallons per day, and to comply with federal environmental regulations. This capacity will accommodate Town Center, Falls Grove, Tower Oaks, and other developments in the City. The City is adding a pump station on Glen Mill Road to increase the transmission capacity to 14 mgd. In addition, the City recently refurbished all three of its water storage tanks. The City has an aggressive maintenance program to ensure that water pipes are upgraded or replaced to meet current health and environmental standards.

A public education program is encouraged to promote the conservation of water resources. In addition, regional cooperation is necessary to devise standards for water usage during drought situations.

Recommendations

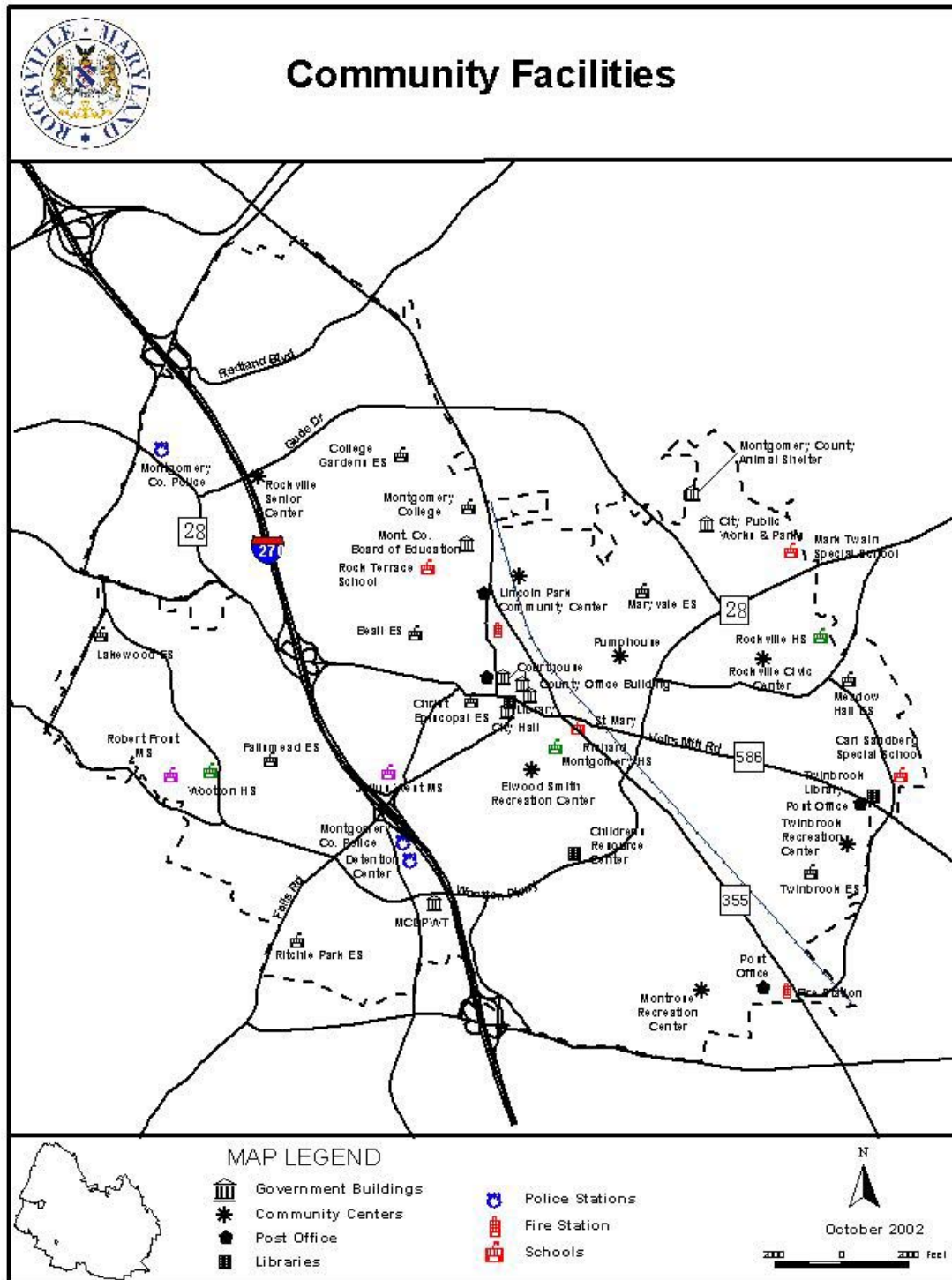
1. Provide adequate water and sewage treatment, transmission, storage, and distribution capacity to ensure healthy, clean and safe systems to meet the needs for human consumption, fire protection, and sanitation.
2. Encourage conservation of water resources – participate with the region to develop an adequate and comprehensive water conservation plan and a drought emergency plan.

Telecommunications and other Communication Technology



The role of telecommunications technology in daily lives has changed dramatically over the last five years. People now expect to have portable telephones and service area coverage no matter where they are physically. With the increase of access to the Internet and e-mail by the public, certain government administrative functions can be facilitated more easily. Meeting agendas and other information can be posted on the City's web site. With technology, people can register for programs or pay fees on line.

In 1996, Congress passed the Federal Telecommunications Act which (among other items) prohibits a municipality from banning communication towers. The construction of towers



and other communication facilities can be regulated as long as the regulations are considered reasonable. The act was passed to facilitate the use of the new technology uniformly throughout the nation. However, the appearance, proliferation, and siting of communication towers and antennas have not always been welcomed by the community – even by those who use the technology. Rockville has developed guidelines for the installation of antennae on buildings to minimize their visual impact.

The *Imagine Rockville* process included a technology component with a number of goals. In response, the City's Department of Information and Technology developed a Strategic Plan in 2000 to guide its current and future use of technology. This plan outlines a number of goals and ways that they can be implemented. The City is committed to strengthening the City's technology infrastructure and enhancing the ways by which technology is used to improve City services.

Recommendations

1. Provide adequate coverage of telecommunication services while limiting the negative impacts of towers and other facilities.
2. Anticipate future need so that these services are provided as they are needed.
3. Lobby telecommunication companies to provide better service to the City.

Public Safety

In the City of Rockville, the Police and Neighborhood and Community Services Departments provide police protection and other social services to the community. In 2000, the City's Neighborhood Enhancement Program and the Neighborhood Resource Program were integrated into the Community Services Department.

The Rockville City Police Department performs the functions typically associated with ensuring a safe community, protecting life and property, regulating safe and efficient vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and assisting in the enforcement of animal care and licensing laws. The Police Department is located in City Hall. Satellite offices are located in the Lincoln Park Community Center and the Twinbrook Community Center. These were established to provide outreach services to the community and for increased police visibility.

The Community Services Department provides for the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through the identification of the human service needs of all residents. The three sections of the department are: Community Services Administration; Youth, Family, and Community Services; and Special Activities. They provide prevention and intervention programs including counseling and outreach services. The Community Services Department is located in a leased facility located on the corner of Maryland Avenue and Montgomery Avenue and shares office space at both the Lincoln Park and Twinbrook Recreation Centers.

The Neighborhood and Community Enhancement Division combines the neighborhood resource coordinator program with the neighborhood enhancement program. The neighborhood resource coordinators are liaisons between Rockville's neighborhoods and City government to facilitate communication. The neighborhood enhancement program includes inspectors who enforce the property maintenance code and who perform rental housing inspections and housing and commercial code enforcement.

Recommendations

1. Maintain adequate public safety facilities to support the required level of services.
2. Close the Seven Locks Detention Center and the County's Central Processing Unit and develop the site under the comprehensive planned development procedures with office use close to I-270 and residential elsewhere.

Fire and Rescue Services

Fire and rescue services to the City are provided by the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department and surrounding stations. The Montgomery County Department of Fire and Rescue Service provides planning and other support services, training for personnel, and funding for capital and operating expenditures. Rockville is serviced by four fire stations located in or near the city boundaries. These are Rockville Fire Station 3 on Hungerford Drive, Rockville Fire Station 23 on Rollins Avenue, Rockville Fire Station 31 on Darnestown Road near Quince Orchard Road, and Rockville Fire Station 33 on Falls Road near Glen Road. Station 3 had the second highest call rate in Montgomery County in 1999. Career and volunteer personnel provide staffing for the four stations.

In February 2000, the Montgomery County Council adopted a series of amendments to the Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services Master Plan originally adopted in 1994. Among these, was the establishment of County-wide response time goals for fire and rescue incidents including density-related goals for urban, suburban, and rural areas. Rockville is split between the urban and suburban zone. Urban goals are to provide a six-minute ambulance or [fire] engine response time to 85% of the population and suburban goals are to provide a six-minute ambulance or [fire] engine response to 65% of the population.

The Master Plan amendments also identified up-county stations and areas where improvements were needed. The areas currently served by Station 3, 31, and 33 were identified as needing additional fire-rescue resources and personnel including a new station in the Rockville-Travilah area. This area is currently served by Stations 3, 28, 31, and 33 and includes the Shady Grove Hospital, the Life Sciences Center, and the residential developments of Glenora Hills, Rockshire, and Fallsgrove. There is a concern that existing stations will not be able to meet the response time goals of the amended master plan. Also, a new station is needed in the vicinity of Darnestown Road and Shady Grove Road. The Fire, Rescue and EMS Master Plan Priority Issues Study (final report, May 1998) also identified the King Farm area as an area in need of fire and rescue resources. The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service continues to explore possible station sites in the vicinity of Route 355 and Shady Grove Road. This includes two stations: 1) one in the vicinity of Darnestown Road and Shady Grove Road and b) one in the vicinity of Route 355 and Shady Grove Road.

Recommendation

1. Provide adequate fire and rescue facilities to meet Rockville's current and future needs.

Post Office

Four U. S. Post Office facilities are located in Rockville. The Main Post Office and the “Old” Post Office are located within the Town Center. The Twinbrook Branch is located on Veirs Mill Road, and the Rockville Pike Station is located on Rollins Avenue. The facilities provide full service retail operations. Parking is limited at all of the post offices except for the Twinbrook location. The U. S. Post Office Master Plan for the National Capital Region for Fiscal Years 2000-2004 recommends no new postal facilities in Rockville.



The “Old” Post Office in Town Center is a significant historical and architectural feature in Town Center. In the event that the facility is no longer used as a post office, the City strongly supports preservation of the structure and desires reuse of the facility that respects the character of the building.

Recommendations

1. Maintain adequate postal facilities to serve the residents and businesses in Rockville.
2. Explore parking options near postal facilities.
3. Preserve the Old Post Office in Town Center with a sensitive adaptive reuse that respects the character of the building.

Libraries

The Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries provides City residents with library services. The two libraries located in Rockville are the Twinbrook Library and the Rockville Regional Library. The Twinbrook Library is located on Veirs Mill Road. It supplements the Rockville Regional Library by providing books and media to meet the needs of the immediate community. There may also be a need for small library facilities (such as in a storefront or a room in a larger facility) in the northwestern area of the City as the King Farm, Fallsgrove development, and the areas north of Shady Grove are developed.

The Rockville Regional Library is currently located in the Town Center across from the City Hall and the County Council



Building. The library building is undersized for the area. A new library is to be constructed by 2003 to house 200,000 volumes (60,000 more than the current capacity), an expanded children's section, study and meeting rooms, and an expanded business resource section. The 2001 Town Center Master Plan called for the regional library facility to remain in the Town Center, and the new library building will be located on property north of Middle Lane. (The former library building will be demolished in order to construct a new District Court.) Providing for adequate parking for library patrons is also an important aspect of the relocation.

Recommendations

1. Provide adequate library services for Rockville residents.
2. Expand opportunities for neighborhood satellite libraries as necessary.
3. Encourage the County to provide adequate parking in the Town Center for library patrons.

Education Facilities

The City is home to a number of public and private educational facilities. The public school system serving Rockville is administered by the Montgomery County Board of Education. The Rockville population is divided into three educational clusters: the Richard Montgomery Cluster, the Rockville Cluster, and the Thomas S. Wootton Cluster. Generally, the clusters have one high school, one middle school, and several elementary schools. There are also schools within the system that serve special needs students. School improvements are described in the annual Educational Facilities Master Plan that outlines goals and forecasts for the upcoming five years.

The Montgomery County School system was the largest school system in Maryland for the school year 2001-02 [with 136,832 students]. The new forecast for births shows gradual increases for the next ten years and also indicates that peak enrollment projection for Montgomery County births in the next six years will be sustained for many years after 2006. The increase in enrollment population has been seen in the impact to the middle schools and also will be seen in increased high school enrollment over the next six years. The enrollment diversity has also increased, as is enrollment in "English for Speakers of Other Languages" classes.

The following are the stated objectives in the Superintendent's Recommended FY 2002 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2001 to FY 2006 Capital Improvements Program.

1. Implement Facility Plans that Support the Educational Program of the School System;
 1. Meet Interim and Long-term Space Needs;
 2. Modernize Schools on a 30-year Cycle Through a Systematic Modernization Schedule;
 3. Provide Schools that are Environmentally Safe, Secure, Functionally Efficient, and Comfortable;
 4. Extend Access of Educational Technology to All Schools;
 5. Support Multipurpose Use of Schools;
 6. Meet Space Needs of Special Education Programs.

In general, it is less expensive to modernize a school facility than to acquire a new site and build a new facility. As stated in the Budget Plan, "the Montgomery County Board of Education, superintendent, and school community recognize the necessity to reduce the

growing backlog of schools needing modernization.” The current modernization schedule effectively places some schools on a 50-year cycle rather than on the desired 30-year cycle. Another educational initiative affecting schools is the desire to provide a comprehensive approach to improve learning in the early childhood years for “high risk” students. Lower class size and all-day kindergarten are methods to achieve that goal. Also, the Board is committed to providing gymnasiums in elementary schools which helps to support the multipurpose use of school facilities. These education and facility goals may have a direct impact on facility needs for the cluster.

Because schools are used for recreational, civic, and educational purposes after school hours, the City provides some support to the school system primarily in helping to maintain the sports fields that are used by the Rockville community for recreation. In the past, some County schools have closed and are now being used as community centers or have been sold to private schools. It is important to maintain compatibility with surrounding residential neighborhoods when educational or other uses are programmed or hours of operation are extended.

There are several private, religious schools within the community. The largest include St. Elizabeth School on Montrose Road, St. Mary’s School on Veirs Mill Road, and Christ Episcopal School on South Washington Street.

The largest publicly funded college within the City is the Rockville Campus of Montgomery College, which opened in 1965. This facility draws over 14,000 students from throughout the County. These students commute to the campus as there are no residential dormitories at the site. Nearby in the Shady Grove area are satellite campuses of the Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland. The viability of these institutions is encouraged as a key to providing the area workers with the education required by the research and development companies in the area.

Recommendations

1. Promote adequate public school facilities to sustain high quality educational programs at reasonable cost.
2. Promote and encourage all students to be educated in neighborhood clusters that are located in Rockville.
3. Promote compatibility between surrounding land uses and closed public school facilities that are used for community use.
4. Preserve the option of returning converted schools back to schools if the need arises due to changing demographics.
5. Maintain school playing fields for City recreational use.
6. Work with the Montgomery County Board of Education to ensure that new gyms are adequate for the community’s use.
7. Support the County’s efforts to address the education needs of a diverse population especially language skills.
8. Encourage the viability of the local higher education institutions as a key to providing resident workers with education required by the companies in the area.

Child and Adult Care Facilities

Traditionally, child and infirm adult care has been provided by the private sector. However, the change in social conditions and mores suggest that a community may want to keep abreast of possible stresses/challenges to the current situation for any impact on its facilities or social services. Over the recent past, there has been an increase in the number of dual working parents and the number of single parents. In addition, as more people with mental or physical challenges are de-institutionalized, separate care facilities will be more important as auxiliary help to families who may provide the primary care. In addition, the population is aging and a variety of support services will be needed to care for the elderly.

In Rockville, child day care services are provided by private family day care providers and group day care operators. The Rockville Department of Recreation and Parks provides some before and after school care programs in existing school buildings for children of school age. However, not all schools have programs. The Department has also identified the need for increased after-school programs to facilitate supervised activities for youths who are considered “latch-key.” The lack of transportation to and from activities has been cited as a problem. In addition, City-directed summer camps provide needed “day-care” for older children during the times school is not in session. The summer camps are very popular and currently offer all day options.

Family day care homes are allowed in any residential zone as long as they conform to State and local restrictions. Larger child care facilities may be permitted in a residential zone as a special exception but are permitted in most commercial and/or industrial zones if initial zoning requirements are met. Adult day care facilities have different zoning constraints. They are not allowed in residential zones (although nursing homes may be allowed under the special exception process). They also are not permitted in the C-1, C-2, RPC and RPR Zones but are permitted in all other industrial, office, and Town Center zones.

To provide care opportunities to residents and employees with varying location and program preferences, the Plan supports the location of centers in both residential neighborhoods and employment settings provided that scale and operation of the facilities are compatible with the surrounding residential communities. The City may want to reevaluate the zoning restrictions for adult day care centers in the commercial and Rockville Pike zones. Location of day care facilities at Metro stations and other transportation hubs should be encouraged.

Recommendations

1. Encourage adequate adult and child care facilities.
2. Ensure compatibility between surrounding land uses and adult and child care facility(s).
3. Review the Zoning Ordinance regarding child care restrictions.
4. Encourage health care facilities and hospitals to locate in the City.